

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PHNOM 16691 01 OF 02 171623Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 088257

R 170900Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8638

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 16691

STADIS/EXDIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EFIN, MPOL, MORG, CB

SUBJ: LONG BORET AGREES TO REMAIN ON AS PRIME MINISTER

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ON DECEMBER 16 I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD HEARD OF HIS PLANS TO RESIGN AND THEN PROCEEDED TO TALK HIM OUT OF IT. LONG BORET EXPLAINED HIS DIFFERENCES WITH KHMER MILITARY, PARTICULARLY HIS PERSONAL ALTERCATIONS WITH C-IN-C SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, AND THAT IF HIS PRESENT SOUNDINGS REVEAL THAT HE IS UNABLE TO BRING KHMER MILITARY UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL, HE WOULD RATHER STEP DOWN THAN REMAIN AT THE HELM OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH ONLY CONTROLS A SMALL PORTION OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. IN ADDITION TO PERSONAL INSULTS HE CLAIMS TO HAVE SUFFERED FROM SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ LAST MONTH, WHEN LON NOL DID NOT SUPPORT HIM AGAINST COMMANDER OF FANK, HE SINGLED OUT FANK'S FISCAL FREEWHEELING AS SOMETHING THAT MUST BE CHANGED IF KHMER ECONOMY IS NOT TO EXPLODE. HE SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE REMOVAL FROM CIVILIAN SUPERVISION OF FANK'S BUDGET, WHICH HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE GENERAL STAFF LAST YEAR. IN THIS WAY FANK CAN SPEND PRETTY MUCH WHAT THEY LIKE, AND THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE NATIONAL BANK HAVE BEEN RELEGATED TO ROLE OF MERE PAYMASTER. IF THE GKR BUDGET IS TO BE BROUGHT UNDER SOME KIND OF CONTROL THIS PRACTICE MUST CEASE, LONG BORET SAID. I SAID THAT I FULLY AGREED WITH HIM ON THE NEED FOR GETTING FINANCIAL CONTROL OVER FANK'S SPENDING, AND

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PHNOM 16691 01 OF 02 171623Z

IF THIS WAS ISSUE AT THE ROOT OF HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH

FANK, I WOULD PERSONALLY INTERVENE WITH APPROPRIATE KHMER AUTHORITIES TO TRY TO REMEDY THIS ANOMALY.

2. LONG BORET CRITICIZED SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ FOR BEING A POWER WITHOUT GKR SUPERVISION WHILE HE, LONG BORET, AS PRIME MINISTER, HAD TO JUSTIFY FANK'S ACTIONS BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. ONE WAY TO REIN IN SOSTHENE WAS FOR HIM TO RELINQUISH HIS TITLE OF C-IN-C (WHERE HE IS ONLY RESPONSIBLE TO MARSHAL LON NOL) AND HE DESIGNATED CHIEF OF STAFF OF FANK. IN THIS LATTER CAPACITY HE WOULD PRESUMABLY BE RESPONSIBLE TO PRIME MINISTER OR MINISTER OF DEFENSE. TO SWEETEN THE PILL, LONG BORET SUGGESTED SOSTHENE BE MADE SIMULTANEOUSLY MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WHICH WOULD IN FACT PLACE HIM UNDER PRIME MINISTER'S CONTROL.

3. I REPLIED THAT WHILE SOSTHENE WAS COMPETENT MILITARY OFFICER, HE WAS ALSO VAIN MAN, AND I THEREFORE DOUBTED FEASIBILITY OF HIS SCHEME. FURTHERMORE, AS COMMANDER OF FANK, SOSTHENE ALREADY HAD A FULL TIME JOB AND WERE HE TO ACCUMULATE PRESENT FUNCTION WITH MINISTER DEFENSE PORTFOLIO, HE WOULD HAVE NO TIME TO WORK EFFECTIVELY IN EITHER JOB. AS ALTERNATIVE, I SUGGESTED THAT SOSTHENE KEEP HIS PRESENT JOB OF C-IN-C FANK BUT RELINQUISH CONTROL OVER MILITARY BUDGET, WHICH SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO CIVILIAN CONTROL. IN ADDITION, I SUGGESTED THAT A NEW GKR MINISTRY BE ESTABLISHED IN CHARGE OF DRAWING UP AND IMPLEMENTING THE ENTIRE BUDGET, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY. THE BUDGETARY PROBLEM IS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO BE ADDRESSED BY AN INDEPENDENT MINISTRY. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT A COMPETENT CIVILIAN BE DESIGNATED AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WITH ONE OR TWO GENERAL OFFICERS AS HIS DEPUTIES. WE REVIEWED SEVERAL CANDIDATES AND AGREED THAT HOU HONG WHO HAS PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE AN HONEST, HARDWORKING, EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATOR OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WITH WHOM WE HAD WORKED WELL DURING THE PROLONGED ABSENCES OF THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE GOOD CANDIDATE. PUTTING IT QUITE BLUNTLY, I SAID THAT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE IS ONLY AS STRONG AS THE SUPPORT HE ENJOYS FROM THE AMERICAN MISSION. IF WE STAND BEHIND

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PHNOM 16691 01 OF 02 171623Z

HIM, HE CAN EVEN STAND UP TO THE MARSHAL. SINCE LONG BORET LIKED MY IDEAS, I SAID I WOULD DISCUSS THIS FORMULA WITH GENERAL PALMER, CHIEF OF MEDTC, WHO ENJOYS GREAT INFLUENCE WITH SOSTHENE, IN ORDER TO BRING HIM AROUND TO THIS COMPROMISE. TO SELL THIS IDEA TO SOSTHENE AND TO DETERMINE WHAT OTHER STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN, BOTH IN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN FIELDS, TO STRENGTHEN THE GKR AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LIFT ACHIEVED

BY THE UN VICTORY, I SUGGESTED THAT WE HOLD A SMALL WORKING DINNER AT MY HOUSE THIS WEEK, BRINGING TOGETHER PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, GENERAL PALMER, ADCM AND MYSELF. LONG BORET AGREED TO THIS SUGGESTION, AND WE HAVE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED SUCH A MEETING FOR DECEMBER 19.

4. AT THAT MEETING WE WILL NOT ONLY DISCUSS WAYS OF IRONING OUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LONG BORET AND THE MILITARY, BUT ALSO SPECIFIC STEPS THE GKR CAN TAKE IN THE FIELD OF FIGHTING CORRUPTION, RETIRING GENERAL OFFICERS, AND SUCH AUSTERITY MEASURES AS INTERDICTING GAMBLING, INCREASING TAXES ON OSTENTATIOUS LUXURIES SUCH AS VILLAS, PRIVATE VEHICLES, ETC. THE IDEA WOULD BE FOR LONG BORET TO GO BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH A PACKAGE WHICH WOULD IMPROVE GKR'S IMAGE, GARNER POPULAR AND ASSEMBLY SUPPORT FOR OVERDUE REFORMS, AND STRENGTHEN GKR POSTURE FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

5. FINALLY, IN PERSUADING LONG BORET TO STAY AT THE HELM, I APPEALED TO HIS EGO. I STRESSED THAT IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON NEGOTIATIONS, AND AN EXPERIENCED, REALISTIC, FLEXIBLE DIPLOMAT WAS NEEDED TO GUIDE GKR IN THIS CRUCIAL PERIOD. I SUGGESTED THAT, WHILE HE IS PRESENTLY KNOWN AS THE SUCCESSFUL DEFENDER OF THE KHMER SEAT AT THE UNGA, I THOUGHT HE WOULD WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS THE KHMER LEADER WHO HELPED BRING PEACE TO HIS COUNTRY THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. I ASSURED LONG BORET OF OUR STRONG SUPPORT IN THE SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO KHMER CONFLICT. I SAID THAT USG WAS NOW

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 PHNOM 16691 02 OF 02 171121Z

13
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
----- 085417

R 170900Z DEC 74
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8639

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 16691

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

DETERMINED TO FIND A DENOUEMENT TO CAMBODIAN CONFLICT.
TO THE EXTENT THAT SE SUCEED IN THE SEARCH FOR A COMPROMISE
SETTLEMENT, I EXPRESSED VIEW HE WOULD ALSO EMERGE AS A REASONABLE
KHMER LEADER WHO THINKS FIRST OF HIS COUNTRY AND NOT
OF PERSONAL INTEREST, WHICH WOULD BE THE CASE WERE
HE TO "OPT OUT". LONG BORET LIKED THE IMAGE I
PAINTED OF HIM AS THE UNSELFISH LEADER GUIDING GOVERNMENT
IN SEARCH OF PEACE, AND THIS LINE PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED
TO HIS DECISION TO REMAIN PRIME MINISTER FOR THE TIME
BEING.

6. WE EVEN DISCUSSED THE COMPOSTION OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT
AND WHICH MINISTERS SHOULD BE REMOVED, EITHER BECAUSE
OF THEIR INEFFICIENCY OR THEIR VENAL QUALITIES. I
LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM LONG BORET AT THIS SESSION
ABOUT CERTAIN MINISTERS. FOR EXAMPLE, MINISTER OF
INTERIOR BRIGADIER GENERAL EK PROEUNG, AN EFFICIENT
ADMINISTRATOR, HAS SUCCUMBED TO THE TEMPTATION OF
SELLING EXIT VISAS FROM CAMBODIA, AND HENCE LONG BORET
PLANS TO DROP HIM FROM THE NEXT CABINET.

7. WHILE I DO NOT WISH TO SOUND OVERLY OPTIMISTIC,
I BELIEVE THE INTERNAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LONG BORET
AND THE MILITARY AND OTHER KHMER PERSONALITIES CAN BE
PATCHED UP, THEREBY BUYING SOME ADDITIONAL TIME. WE
HOPE THE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM WE MAINTAIN HERE WILL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PHNOM 16691 02 OF 02 171121Z

BE USED BY US FOR PRESSING ON RAPIDLY WITH OUR MAIN
TASK: EARLY NEGOTIATIONS TO ACHIEVE A COMPROMISE
SETTLEMENT TOTHE KHMER CONFLICT.
DEAN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PHNOM16691
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740366-1066
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741229/aaaaayky.tel
Line Count: 209
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LONG BORET AGREES TO REMAIN ON AS PRIME MINISTER
TAGS: PINT, EFIN, MPOL, MORG, CB, (LONG BORET)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005